

Message Text

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ACTION SCS-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4261
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ZAGREB 081

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CASC (POD, ELI)
SUBJECT: W/W AMCIT ELI POD

REF: ZAGREB 1071

1. DURING CALL BY CONSULAR OFFICER JANUARY 31, 1977 ON MIHAJLO MONTILJO, DEPUTY CHIEF OF CROATIAN BUREAU OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS REGARDING STATUS OF POD CASE, MONTILJO STATED THAT THE BUREAU HAD BEEN CRITICIZED BY SUPERVISORS FOR POSSIBLY MISHANDLING THE CONTACT WITH THE CONSULATE GENERAL. MONTILJO STATED THAT SOME TIME IN MID-DECEMBER 1976 THE VOICE OF AMERICA STATED THAT "AMERICAN OFFICIALS HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED ABOUT THE PROPER CRIMINAL PROCEDURES IN THE CASE," AND THAT THE USG WAS CRITICAL OF THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE SITUATION. MONTILJO WAS UNABLE TO EXPAND ON THE COMMENT SINCE HE HAD NEITHER HEARD THE BROADCAST NOR SEEN A COPY OF THE TEXT OF THE BROADCAST. WHEN ASKED WHICH SUPERVISORS HAD RAISED CRITICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BUREAU'S HANDLING OF THE CASE, MONTILJO STATED THAT LJUBOMIR MAJERIC, PRESIDENT OF THE CROATIAN COMMISSION FOR RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND HIS DEPUTY JAKSA BUCEVIC HAD COMMENTED ABOUT THE BROADCAST.

2. CONSULAR OFFICER EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT THE BROADCAST HAD COMMENTED ABOUT THE LACK OF INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PROPER CRIMINAL PROCEDURES, SNVYZ THAT WAS NOT THE CASE. HE NOTED
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THAT THE PRINCIPAL COMPLAINT ON THE PART OF THE CONSULATE WAS THAT A CONSULAR OFFICER HAD NOT BEEN PRESENT AT THE OGULIN MUNICIPAL COURT DURING POD'S TRIAL. MONTILJO AGREED THAT THIS UNFORTUNATELY WAS THE PROBLEM BUT HE FELT THAT THE BUREAU HAD DONE EVERYTHING WITHIN ITS POWERS TO INFORM THE CONSULATE ABOUT THE ARREST AND TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING CONSULAR ACCESS. HE FURTHER STATED THAT AS A RESULT OF A PREVIOUS

MEETING, REPORTED IN REFTTEL, ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS ON THE SUBJECT HAD BEEN CLARIFIED.

3. GIVEN THE LACK OF PRECISE INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT WAS ACTUALLY SAID, THE CONSULAR OFFICER TOLD MONTILJO THAT HE WOULD TRY TO OBTAIN A COPY OF THE TEXT AND REVIEW IT WITH HIM TO CLARIFY THE APPARENT CONFUSION AND POSSIBLE MISINTERPRETATION. MONTILJO STATED THAT THIS WOULD PROVE MOST HELPFUL SINCE THE BUREAU WAS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE A WRITTEN REPORT TO MAJERIC ON ITS ROLE IN THE POD CASE. KAISER

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